

Looking Forward to 2024?, by Philip Giraldi - The Unz Review

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It seems that the administration of President Joe Biden ably supported by a know-nothing bought Congress leans over backwards to make sure that it never is tempted to do the right thing for the American people. I am not necessarily talking about Genocide Joe's regrettable interactions with our favorite comedian pretending to be a head of state Volodymyr Zelensky or with Israel's despicable Benjamin Netanyahu, but rather am thinking about the instances where the government might act to benefit an American and instead does nothing but sit on its hands, metaphorically speaking, and exhibit instead a vacant, self-satisfied grin.

I am particularly thinking [of the death of](#) Chilean-American journalist Gonzalo Lira that took place on January 11th at a hospital in Kharkov in Ukraine. Lira has been living in Ukraine and it has been suggested that he has a Ukrainian wife and children. He has written three novels and is a regular poster with videos and articles on YouTube under the user name Coach Red Pill, where he has obtained a considerable audience as a truth teller. He also has appeared on alternative news shows to include Tucker Carlson, who announced on his page on X the news of Lira's death. Lira had developed into a prominent and reliable commentator on the Russia-Ukraine war and was arrested and imprisoned for speaking and writing on conflict related issues critical of the Volodymyr Zelensky government. Lira reportedly had made no friends in the Ukrainian government when [he accurately called](#) Ukraine's leader a "cokehead," and perhaps hyperbolically described the Russian operation as "one of the most brilliant invasions in military history."

On May 1st 2023 Lira was detained on [charges](#) of "production and dissemination of materials justifying Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine" before being

released on bail but was soon re-arrested, allegedly for violating the terms of his parole by again speaking publicly against the Zelensky regime. He has also been sharply critical of President Joe Biden for his efforts to support Ukraine and by doing so, contributing to the continuation of the conflict, which has possibly already killed as many as 500,000 Ukrainians. Apart from his imprisonment, Lira was reportedly placed on the notorious “kill list” maintained by elements in the Ukrainian government.

Lira had first come to prominence in 2022 when he emerged in the alternative media as a credible critical voice in an “increasingly dictatorial” Ukraine. Calls for his release from prison were forthcoming from, among others, Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson, but they were ignored. During his imprisonment, Lira was able to have limited contact with his father in the US, who has shared the email and other documents with the media, revealing that his son was suffering from pneumonia, which presumably is what killed him if he was not in fact murdered to silence him, see below. Lira’s bad health was ignored by the prison administration, which denied him medical treatment. Lira was also reportedly beaten, tortured and threatened still worse if he did not pay a fine to his jailers. His father pleaded with the American Embassy in Kiev to provide some assistance to his son but they appeared to do nothing to try to get him treated or released.

On January 4th, Lira was reportedly finally taken to the hospital and allowed to see his lawyer for the first time in months. He gave the defense attorney a handwritten note that he had concealed on his person which reads: “I have had double pneumonia (both lungs) as well as pneumothorax and a very severe case of edema (swelling of the body). All this started in mid-October, but was ignored by the prison. They only admitted I had pneumonia at a Dec. 22 hearing. I am about to have a procedure to reduce the edema pressure in my lungs, which is causing me extreme shortness of breath, to the point of passing out after minimal activity, or even just talking for 2 minutes.” Desperate pleas for the Embassy to intervene were again submitted by Lira’s father, to no avail and Lira died a week later.

Lira's father now blames Washington and Kiev for his son's death. He wrote "I cannot accept the way my son has died. He was tortured, extorted, incommunicado for 8 months and 11 days and the US Embassy did nothing to help my son. The responsibility of this tragedy is [with] the dictator Zelensky with the concurrence of a senile American President, Joe Biden. My pain is unbearable. The world must know what is going on in Ukraine with that inhuman dictator Zelensky."

There is an interesting back story circulating which suggests that Lira may have been basically tortured to death to extort from his family \$500,000. The money was to be transferred in cryptocurrency to the bank accounts of the SBU agents' who were in charge of him. When he made an attempt to tell that story to his lawyer, his jailers may have decided it was best to kill him to keep him quiet. The vice-consul of the US Embassy, who dealt with the problems of Lira, was informed of the extortion by Lira's father and twice wrote to the SBU and the OP, but no one did anything to press hard for Lira's freedom and medical treatment.

Why does Lira's death anger me? It is because the Biden Administration's State Department appears to apply a political litmus test to the cases of Americans unlawfully detained overseas. In Ukraine, the US government, Zelensky's major source of funding and weapons, had considerable leverage to seek leniency for Lira, but it chose not to exercise that power. One phone call from the White House or from Secretary of State Antony Blinken would have likely saved his life. To be sure Lira, as a critic of both Zelensky and Biden, would have had difficulty in obtaining Embassy assistance in any case, but it is interesting to observe the profiling that goes on when it comes time to actually do something to help an American in trouble. Ex-Marine Paul Whelan has spent the past four years in prison in Russia on spying charges, which he denies, and he has been desperately pleading for an exchange to be made to get him released, but he seems to believe that the Embassy is doing nothing. Compare that with the recent case where WNBA basketball star Brittney Griner was arrested eleven months ago when she was found to have illegal drugs on her when she was entering Russia. Griner fits the preferred Democratic Party profile – a black, homosexual, "tattooed female athlete who has refused to come out of the locker room for the national anthem"

before WNBA games. If only she had also been Jewish she would have been a perfect example of the Democrats' new model American. So, given all that, it should be no surprise that her arrest was heavily reported in the liberal Russian hating media and her cause was taken up as a priority by Biden's State Department, which arranged for her release a month ago in exchange for notorious Russian international arms dealer Viktor Bout, nicknamed "The Merchant of Death."

And bear in mind that this is the same US government that in bipartisan fashion has been behind the imprisonment of journalist Julien Assange in Britain, held now for nearly four years under harsh conditions in Belmarsh top security prison, awaiting a final decision from a British court on his appeal against extradition over completely bogus Espionage Act charges that will put him in front of a kangaroo court in Virginia that will condemn him to the slammer for the rest of his life. Former CIA Director Mike Pompeo labeled Assange and his news organization Wikileaks a "hostile intelligence service," and that was apparently enough to imprison and maybe kill an honest man. Folks named Trump and Biden don't seem happy unless they are exercising powers that they don't really legally have to punish someone somewhere.

The first weeks in January also saw the planned release by the Justice Department of some papers relating to the investigations of Mossad agent Jeffrey Epstein and also the Seth Rich killing. It was a good thing expectations were low. The fourth batch of Epstein documents to be released contained numerous prominent names but much contradictory material and other allegations that could not be proven, though the claim that one of the Epstein girls was forced to have sex with Alan Dershowitz is too disgusting to even contemplate. In the Seth Rich case, the Democratic Party staffer who may have leaked material to Julien Assange and who possibly was killed under mysterious circumstances to silence him, the FBI had been ordered to turn over material related to his death of former DNC staffer Seth Rich to Attorney Ty Clevenger. But the Bureau has now stated that it does not intend to comply with the court order. Some reporters and other observers have expressed concerns about the situation, suspecting that the

highly politicized FBI is defying the court order to protect the Democratic Party and more particularly the Clintons.

Finally, Mr. Biden and his friends have brought us more war. The Houthis of Yemen responded to Israel's slaughter of the Gazans by attacking ships transiting the Red Sea bound for Israel or which were owned by Israelis. The United States and Britain responded by attacking Yemen and declaring the Houthis to be specially designated global terrorists, which has had the effect of increasing successful attacks on shipping. The developing regional instability has also led by various steps to missile and drone exchanges targeting various militant groups in Iran, and Pakistan, expanding the conflict between those two countries. Targets have also been hit in Iraq and Syria. In the case of the US action against Yemen, that was an unconstitutional decision by Biden to go to war without an imminent threat to the United States or a declaration of war by Congress. It comes on top of Biden's previous two decisions to send hundreds of millions of dollars worth of weapons to Israel without the required Congressional review.

This was all going on in front of the backdrop of the United Nations' International Court of Justice's consideration of the overwhelming case that Israel is engaging in genocide in Gaza, where the court can call for an immediate cessation of the bombing and impose sanctions or a blockade if it determines that the case is made. If so, Israel will ignore the ruling, as it has done repeatedly in the past, and the Jewish state's intransigence will be fully supported by Washington. On January 16th, there was a vote in the Senate over a resolution introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders requiring a Senate report on human rights violation by Israel. Only 11 Senators supported Sanders and the motion was tabled, where it will be allowed to die. On the same day, federal government employees staged a walkout to protest against Biden's policy towards the genocide in Gaza. House Speaker Mike Johnson demanding that the protesters be fired. Two days later Netanyahu rejected a desperate Biden suggestion that there should emerge some form of Palestinian state after the Gaza military action by Israel is concluded – Bibi said there would be no Palestinian state and emphasized that he was “Capable of saying no to our friends.” Biden should have

told him to “get stuffed” no more weapons and money Bibi, but as he is an invertebrate he has no backbone.

These are all bad decisions and they will produce very bad consequences, just like the Ukraine conflict has already done. And for a look ahead to what horrors might be coming it might be interesting to have some British input. Grant Shapps, who is Jewish, gave his first major speech since becoming Defense Secretary for the United Kingdom in the Summer of 2023, laying out the argument for a dramatic increase in spending for both deterrence and in preparations for eventual multiple wars. He warned that the world is in a “pre-war” phase, with conflict potentially breaking out within five years in key areas “against major and rising world powers.” He said “We find ourselves at the dawn of this new era — the Berlin Wall a distant memory — and we’ve come full circle, moving from a post-war to pre-war world. An age of idealism has been replaced by a period of hard-headed realism. Today our adversaries are busily rebuilding their barriers. Old enemies are reanimated. New foes are taking shape. Battle lines are being redrawn.” He was referring to Russia, China, Iran and North Korea, which presumably would be piled on top of the current Ukraine war as well as the support for Israel’s genocide backed by both Britain and the US, which no doubt will keep the Middle East and beyond in turmoil for some years to come. It is definitely something to not look forward to in 2024 and beyond!

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